

McCall, Brandon

From: Catherine Wood <Kittswit@cox.net>
Sent: Friday, April 12, 2013 9:10 AM
To: Jud Testimony
Subject: Bill H.B. No. 6690

I **OPPOSE** Raised Bill H.B. No. 6690 as presently written.

The prospect of having greater representation for animals in court proceedings is a noble one. In pursuit of that aim, however, this bill is ill advised and fraught with significant problems. Several areas of concern arise regarding its present features:

- It would essentially establish legal “personhood” for domestic and farm animals in this state, a precursor to legalizing guardianship status for those animals. In effect, those steps would relegate the owner of the animal to the status of custodian, guardian or trustee, thus running counter to property rights under existing law.
- The animal advocate could be other than an attorney-at-law. This would appear to create a new category of “legal paraprofessionals” permitted to practice limited law in court proceedings representing animal “clients”.
- Limits on the investigative powers conferred upon the animal advocate are not specified.
- No qualification training requirements for an animal advocate with regard to investigatory procedures are specified.
- No constraints, if any, in the animal advocate’s conduct of any investigation undertaken are specified. Would that investigation more properly and effectively be conducted by a law enforcement or other officer?
- How would the selection of a volunteer advocate be determined by the Department of Agriculture?

Respectfully,

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